

## The Industrial Revolution

Choose one invention of the Industrial Revolution. Describe how this invention affected people's lives and tell how it changed transportation, communication, manufacturing and/or agriculture.

### Robert Fulton: The Steamboat

In the early 1800s, Robert Fulton became interested in developing a steamboat. He had been interested in a steam propelled boat for many years and in 1802 he began working with the ambassador to France, Robert Livingston in Paris to build a steam powered boat. The first steam boat was built in Paris and had successful voyages but it eventually sank because the engine was too heavy. Fulton returned to the United States to build his own steam powered boat.

In New York in 1807 Robert Fulton planned and directed the building a steam powered ship called the Clermont. Fulton did not build his own steam engine. He bought one from Watt and made changes to the engine so that it worked on the boat. The ship's first successful voyage was from New York City to Albany, New York on the Hudson River. The trip was 150 miles and took about 30 hours, including an overnight stop. Robert Fulton had the boat rebuilt and began a regular service for passengers on the Hudson River. There had been steamboats before the Clermont but this was the first steamboat that was practical and the Clermont was a financial success.

The boat was long and thin and observers stared as they saw this powered boat with flames and smoke coming out of it. Many thought the ship would roll over because it was so thin and that it would sink. Others thought the steaming boat would blow up. The Clermont was called "Mr. Fulton's Folly" but people were wrong. Mr. Fulton wanted people to be comfortable on his steamboat and provided meals and comfortable sleeping. The Clermont was a vast improvement in transportation.

